

**Washington, D.C.**—U.S. Rep. Todd Akin (R-Mo.), the Chairman of the House Armed Services Subcommittee on Seapower and Projection Forces, released the following statement for the subcommittee's hearing regarding the amphibious requirements and operational deployment plans necessary to effectively meet U.S. combatant commanders' demands to engage forward, respond to crisis and project power.

"First, I'd appreciate at some point if Admiral Blake and General Flynn could give us a short update on how the 7<sup>th</sup> Fleet is responding to the current crisis in Japan. Our thoughts and prayers go out to all of the victims, survivors and family members who are trying to get through this terrible disaster. Fortunately we have a United States Navy and Marine Corps that can provide humanitarian assistance in cases such as this and I know the subcommittee would appreciate a short update on how our Navy and Marine Corps personnel are responding.

"This is of course very relevant to today's hearing. We know that Department of Navy officials agree that a 38-ship amphibious force would more fully meet the Marine Corps' 2.0 Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) assault echelon lift requirement. We also know that a 33-ship amphibious force is the minimum number. And in fact that minimum number currently isn't planned to be reached until 2017. We need to fully understand what risk is associated with maintaining an amphibious ship inventory less than 38 ships?

"Finally, it is no secret that I do not agree with the decision to terminate the Expeditionary Fighting Vehicle (EFV). I fear that although there is a lot of talk about support for a new vehicle to replace the EFV, history tells us that when it is all said and done, the Marine Corps will probably only get an upgraded version of the current Amphibious Assault Vehicle (AAV). It is important for the members of this committee to understand what the current status of the EFV contract is and how the \$3.3 billion dollars that has been spent on this program won't be for naught."

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